

Recruitment of the South Downs National Park Citizens Panel

Final report – updated

January 2018

Author

Tanya Hibberd, Performance and Research Lead



Introduction

In May 2017, ICM Direct (now known as Walnut Unlimited) was contracted to recruit 2,000 people to the South Downs National Park Citizens Panel. Between 31st July and 29th August 2017, ICM Direct telephone interviewers recruited 2010 people to the Panel¹.

This short report outlines the key results from the recruitment exercise.

Results

Preference for participation in either online or pre-paid postal surveys for the South Downs National Park Authority

While 58% of panel members (1,160 people) were happy to take part in online surveys, a surprisingly high 43% (852 people) wanted to be surveyed by post. This was unanticipated as we had assumed that most people would want to take part in online surveys and thus had not allowed for this in our survey budget

- In readiness for the first full panel survey in October, we therefore had to allocate £7,000 from the research budget to enable us to survey 852 panel members by post
- Perhaps unsurprisingly, the over 65s were the age group most likely to want to undertake surveys by post (56%) – as this group makes up over a third of the Panel, it therefore made a significant difference
- Very few panel members wanted to be surveyed by post because they did not have access to a laptop/mobile/tablet or they did not have a good enough/any broadband connection. Rather, people who asked to be surveyed by post, generally stated that this was because they just prefer to do surveys by post, they want a break from being inundated by emails or it will better enable them to do surveys with their partner / spouse.

Recommendation:

During the refreshment exercise in 2018 when 666 people will be removed from the panel and 666 new people recruited, the recruitment questionnaire will be reworded so that people will only be offered the option of participating in online surveys unless they specifically request a postal questionnaire.

¹ Approximately 45 numbers were dialled to obtain one recruit to the Panel



Willingness to take part in an online community

Of the 1,160 panel members who wanted to take part in online surveys, 53% (612 people) were willing to take part in an online community². Almost one in ten (9%) were not sure, suggesting that they might agree to take part if they had more information about what this would entail.

- Those aged 25-34 and those from the BN postcode area were the most interested in taking part in an online community (60% and 58% respectively).

Recommendation:

With so many panel members willing to take part in an online community, it offers a vital opportunity to test aspects of the website with panel members and obtain feedback on usability, content etc.

Prior awareness of the South Downs National Park

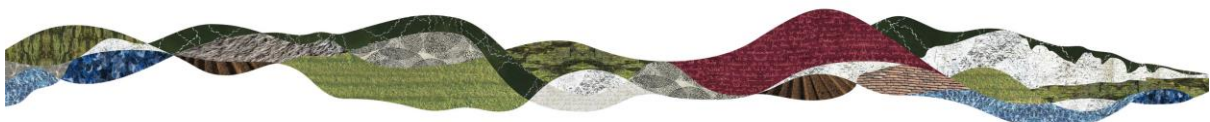
Awareness of the South Downs National Park is very good, with over nine in ten panel members (91%) stating that they *had* heard of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) before they were called.

- Those aged 65 and over were the most likely to have heard of the SDNP (95% - compared to just 44% of 16-24 year olds)
- People living in the GU postcode area were the most likely to have heard of the SDNP (95%)
- Most had heard of the SDNP because they live in/know someone who lives in the National Park. Other reasons given included: heard of it via the media (newspapers, online, etc), and have visited / am a regular visitor to the SDNP.

Recommendation:

Measure awareness of the National Park and the shared identity once a year to track changes in awareness over time – particularly once road signage is introduced at key entry points in the National Park in 2018.

² Participants would be asked a series of questions and asked to complete small tasks online over 3-4 days.



Prior awareness of the South Downs National Park Authority

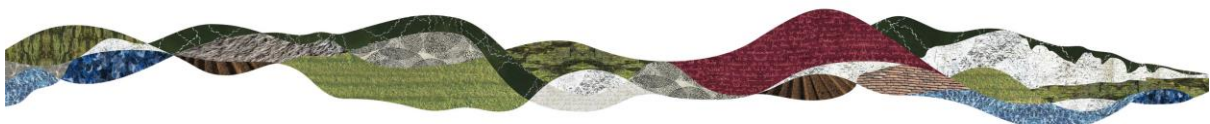
Just over half the panel members (53%) *had* heard of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) before they were called³.

- Those aged 55-64 and 65 and over were the most likely to have heard of the SDNPA (60% both - compared to just 22% of 16-24 year olds)
- People living in the GU postcode area were the most likely to have heard of the SDNPA (64%) – possibly due to the location of our head office
- Most had heard of the SDNPA via the media (newspapers, online, etc). Other reasons given included: just knew; live in/know someone who lives in the National Park
- Most panel members were clear as to the difference between the National Park and the Authority. There is no benefit to asking this question in future.

Recommendation:

We do not need to ask panel members about awareness of the Authority again and will not include it as a question during the refreshment exercise. Instead, we will ask this question of YouGov panel members when we commission the next survey in November 2018 as this will give us a very useful UK-wide perspective.

³ Note that, as with the question above, this question was asked of the first 1,279 panel recruits and was then removed from the questionnaire due to feedback from telephone interviewers that many people queried the relevance of the question



How panel members like to spend their outdoor leisure time

Almost two thirds of panel members (65%) like **going for a walk**. Over 10% like to **go for a leisure on-road cycle ride** (14%), **go for a leisure off-road cycle ride** (12%) or **walk their dog** (12%). Other activities undertaken by a large number of panel members included: camping/caravanning; gardening; visiting the beach/doing water-based sports – including fishing and swimming.

Recommendation:

This question has provided some useful information about how panel members like to spend their free time. We can utilise this in smaller scale studies if need be – for example undertake a piece of focused research with cyclists on behalf of our access team.

Citizens panel demographics

Gender

The **gender** profile of the panel is: 57% female and 43% male.

Age

The **age** profile of the panel is below, compared against 2015 population figures:

Age range	Citizens Panel (%)	2015 population data for the National Park
16-24	2%	8%
25-34	5%	10%
35-44	10%	14%
45-54	21%	20%
55-64	24%	18%
65 and over	37%	31%
Total	100%	100%

Recommendation:

When the panel is refreshed in 2018, a big focus will be on recruiting more 16-24 and 25-34 year olds to the panel to bring the proportion of panel members in these age groups more in line with the 2015 population profile.



Ethnicity

The vast majority of panel members are **White British** (90%). A small proportion are **White Other** (5%), with the remaining 5% consisting of **Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Mixed race** or **'Other'** ethnic group.

- The ethnic profile of members of the Citizens Panel matches that of the South Downs National Park residents⁴
- Note that two thirds of non-white panel members were from the BN (34%) or RH (32%) postcode areas.

Recommendation:

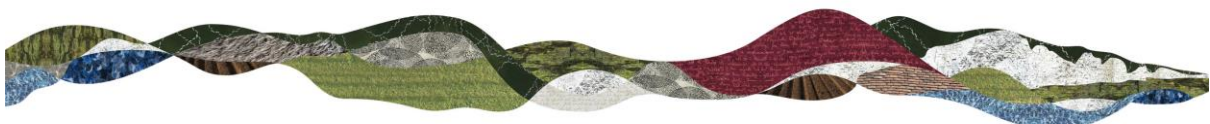
Whilst the ethnic profile of the Panel is representative of South Downs National Park residents, we will undertake a booster exercise during the panel refreshment in 2018, to ensure a higher proportion of people from BAME groups are recruited. This will enable us to undertake more in depth research with these groups which would be of benefit to the Authority's outreach work.

Limiting mental or physical health problem or disability

In the main, panel members stated that their day to day activities are *not limited* because of a **mental or physical health problem or disability** (87%). However, for 5% of Panel members, their day to day activities are *limited a lot*, and for a further 6%, their day to day activities are *limited a little*.

- A marginally higher proportion of female panel members stated their day to day activities were limited a little or a lot because of a mental or physical health problem (15% females compared to 8% males)
- The older the age group, the more likely panel members are to have a mental or physical problem or disability that limits their day to day activities

⁴ Source: 2011 Census data cut to the National Park boundary



Working status

Almost four in ten panel members (38%) are **retired**; 28% are in **full time employment**; 13% are in **part-time employment**, and 13% are **self-employed**.

Postcode

The **postcode** profile of Panel members is based on 2011 Census information and is as follows:⁵

Postcode	Proportion of Panel based on 2011 Census	Number of Panel members
BN	35%	701
GU	16%	329
PO	27%	540
RH	15%	300
SO	7%	140
Total	100%	2010

- The proportion of those within the six age bands recruited from the five postcode areas was broadly in line with the proportions detailed in the table above. The one exception was in the 16-24 age group where 30% of panel members were from the **RH** postcode area
- 42% of those whose day to day activities are limited *a lot* are from the BN postcode area
- The table below shows some interesting variations between panel members' working status depending upon the postcode area they live:

	BN	GU	PO	RH	SO	Base
Retired	38%	16%	26%	14%	6%	753
Employee, full time	31%	15%	28%	19%	8%	571
Self employed	34%	22%	22%	13%	9%	259
Employee, part time	36%	14%	30%	14%	6%	253
TOTAL	35%	16%	27%	15%	7%	

⁵ Our main requirement during recruitment was that people be recruited by postcode to the proportions laid out in the table.

